

Turkey's Policy on the Cyprus Question: Strategic Goals and Negotiating Positions towards a Solution of the Cyprus Problem

EVAGHORAS L. EVAGHOROU¹

Abstract

The Cyprus question is an important and crucial issue for Turkey's national interests and foreign policy, connected with state security, but also with its wider hegemonic claims in the region. The efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem have been ongoing for decades, leading Turkey to design political and negotiating positions, integrated into a strategic plan, which, in case of a final solution, will secure its national interests in Cyprus. The analysis of Turkey's positions in the negotiations for resolving the Cyprus problem, as well as the identification of shaping factors and causal links, aim to determine the degree of connection with Turkey's wider strategic aspirations, not only in Cyprus, but also in the Eastern Mediterranean. Determining the strength of this connection between Turkey's political and negotiating positions and its wider strategic pursuits leads to conclusions regarding a possible resolution of the Cyprus problem.

Keywords: Cyprus question, Turkey, Turkey's strategy, Cyprus, negotiations on the Cyprus problem

Introduction

The last two decades have seen Turkey deploy an intensifying revisionist strategy in its region and continue to pursue a 'neo-Ottoman' foreign policy using interventionism as the main dogma in the relationship with its neighboring states.² Turkey's aspirations about Cyprus form part of this strategic approach. The Cyprus question occupies a prominent place in Turkey's foreign policy agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean region. It continues to be a strategic issue of critical importance for Turkey's national interests, as it is closely linked with the security priorities and the hegemonic

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of International and European Studies, School of Economics, Business, and International Studies, University of Piraeus.

² Clemens Hoffmann, 'Neo-Ottomanism, Eurasianism or Securing the Region? A Longer View on Turkey's Interventionism' (2019) 19(3) *Conflict, Security and Development* 301; Ali Emre Sucu et al., 'Transformation of Middle Powers with the Decline of World Hegemony: The Case of Turkey' (2021) 45(4) *Strategic Analysis* 307.

aspirations of the Turkish state.³ Its critical nature for Turkey lies in the fact that the Turkish strategy identifies the Cyprus question with both its hegemonic claims in the region, and the wider geostrategic developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East: inter alia, the Greek-Turkish dispute; the crisis in Syria and Turkey's presence on Syrian territory; the Kurdish-Turkish conflict; the immigration issue; Turkey's relations with the Muslim world; the tightening of its relations with Russia, especially in the light of the Ukrainian war; Turkey's relation with Iran; and, the control of energy sources and energy transport pipelines.⁴ Although Turkey's foreign policy faces a number of important and critical issues to manage, related to securing its geostrategic interests, like those noted above, the Cyprus question remains an important issue for Turkey. It represents, in combination with the other issues, a link in an interconnected chain of fulfilling its hegemonic ambitions.

At the same time, the procedures for resolving the Cyprus problem have been going on for decades –despite the long pauses in the negotiation process. Turkey plays an important role in these procedures and also significantly shapes their content. A solution to the Cyprus problem, that could emerge in the near or in the distant future, has geostrategic consequences for the Turkish national interests. It will also affect the international position –political and strategic- and the image of Turkey, mainly vis-à-vis the member states of NATO and the European Union (EU), but also the other states in the region.

Considering the gravity of the Cyprus problem for Turkey's security and strategy, and the occasionally intensifying negotiations for a solution, this article seeks to determine the causes behind Turkey's positions, and to evaluate Turkey's strategic planning with regard to its ambitions on the island. Since it is generally accepted that the Cyprus problem is dealt by Turkey in geostrategic terms and based on its national interests,⁵ the main purpose of this analysis is to highlight the connection between Turkey's political and negotiating positions and its broader strategic aspira-

³ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst & Company, 2003) 369; Ozan Örmeci, Kisacik Sina, 'Cutting the Gordian Knot: Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Cyprus During AK Party Era (2002-2020)' (2020) 1 *Studia I Analizy Nauk O Polityce* 21, 22.

⁴ For a collection and an analysis of the contemporary issues in Turkey's foreign policy in relation with the hegemonic aspirations of the Turkish state, see Soner Cagaptay, *Erdogan's Empire: Turkey and the Politics of the Middle East* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2019); Katerina Dalacoura, 'Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Power Projection and Post-Ideological Politics' (2021) 97(4) *International Affairs* 1125.

⁵ Semin Suvarierol, 'The Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey's Road to Membership in the European Union' (2003) 4 *Turkish Studies* 55, 56-57; Tolga Demiryol, 'Between Security and Prosperity: Turkey and the

tions. Through the process of identifying the main causes that shape Turkey's behaviour, the analysis offers an evaluation of the objectives of the Turkish strategy on the Cyprus question, as well as the plans for its implementation.

With regards to the methodology, the present work has the following perspective: Initially, the central research objective and its characteristics are defined and outlined, first, to determine the causes behind Turkey's positions on the Cyprus question and second, to evaluate Turkey's strategic planning with regards to its ambitions on the island, in the time frame of the last two decades, and in the geographical space of the island of Cyprus, and more broadly, the Eastern Mediterranean. Subsequently, the data collected through the research process are analysed and explained, within the aforementioned space and time frames, in order to fulfill the research objectives. The empirical data used for this research derive from the collection and examination of databases and studies of the recent past, and of current developments regarding Turkey's political positioning and strategic pursuits. For the collection and analysis of the data, the research method of observing primary and secondary sources, as well as previous research, is used. It includes information and data from sources as listed below. Finally, based on the analysed data, the research results and final conclusions are presented with reference to the research objectives.

For analysing the case study, the theoretical background relates to the analysis of a state's foreign policy. Namely, the identification and explanation of the causes that determine and shape it; the clarification and explanation of the complexity of the factors that affect this policy; and the complexity of issues that its implementation aims to resolve, in relation and interaction with other states in the international system.⁶ More specifically, the theoretical background focuses on the analytical framework of the combination between the state level analysis and the systemic macro-level analysis, within which the foreign policy analysis, alongside the state's internal capabilities, accepts and integrates systemic factors that affect it and partially determine its results.⁷ In this regard, the chosen theoretical framework helps in analysing and

Prospect of Energy Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean' (2019) 20(3) *Turkish Studies* 442, 444-445.

⁶ Graham T. Allison, Philip Zelikow, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (2nd edn., first published 1971, New York: Pearson Education, 1999); Chris Alden, Amnon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (2nd edn., first published 2011, London and New York: Routledge 2017); Valerie M. Hudson, Benjamin S. Day, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).

⁷ Walter Carlsnaes, 'Actors, Structures, and Foreign Policy Analysis' in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Timothy Dunne (eds) *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases* (3rd edn., first published 2008, Oxford:

understanding the Turkish foreign policy on a specific field that concerns the Cyprus question, taking into account the capabilities of the Turkish state (political, military, economic, diplomatic) in combination with the macroscopic factors that affect it, such as the geostrategic developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, the acquisition of a comparative geostrategic advantage on the island, and the actions of the other states involved in this issue.

Based on the above introductory remarks framing this research –namely, the description of the object to be researched, the intended objectives of the research, the methodological clarifications, and the theoretical framework– henceforth, the article has the following structure: First, it highlights and justifies the seriousness of the Cyprus question for Turkey’s national interests, laying the foundations for understanding the Turkish strategy on this issue. Second, it examines the geostrategic environment in which the Turkish strategy is deployed, focusing on the geostrategic aspects of the Cyprus question. The third part consists of the presentation and analysis of the negotiation practices implemented by Turkey via the Turkish Cypriot (T/C) community, in light of their connection with Turkey’s strategic objectives. The ultimate purpose of this analysis is to examine the strength of the connection between Turkey’s negotiating positions and its strategic pursuits in the Cyprus conflict. The final part highlights the strategic difficulties for Turkey, as well as the dilemmas for the Turkish state resulting from the absence of a solution to the Cyprus problem. This analysis helps to illustrate future trends in the Turkish strategy on the Cyprus question.

Strategic Features of the Cyprus Question and the Turkish Strategy

Turkey’s foreign policy in the last two decades, under the rule of Justice and Development Party (AKP), systematically works towards the rearrangement and strengthening of its power, in all sectors. Ultimately, Turkey’s goals are, to obtain an autonomy of actions and to emerge as a hegemonic power in the region; its involvement in issues in its wider region as a problem-solving state; to promote Davutoğlu’s zero problems with neighbours policy; and, the renegotiation of its relations with the West and its participation in the NATO, under conditions that serve Turkey’s interests.⁸

The Cyprus question, as well as the process of its management, could be included in the wider frame of Turkey’s foreign policy. The Cyprus question significantly concerns Turkey’s foreign policy and is linked to its geostrategic aspirations. The

Oxford University Press 2016) 113; Hudson, Day (no 6) 169-188.

⁸ Lars Haugom, ‘Turkish Foreign Policy under Erdogan: A Change in International Orientation?’ (2019) 38(3) *Comparative Strategy* 206.

Cyprus question remains in its essence a geostrategic issue, while the geostrategic value of the island of Cyprus is very important for Turkey's national interests, having even regional ramifications.⁹ After all, as early as the 1950s, the Kemalist Nihat Erim, advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, had pointed out the geostrategic importance of Cyprus for Turkey.¹⁰ In contemporary terms, the geostrategic importance of Cyprus for the Turkish national strategy is most clearly defined by the former Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu who notes: 'Even if there was not a Muslim Turk there [in Cyprus], Turkey had to maintain a Cypriot issue [...] Turkey is obliged from a strategic point of view to be interested in Cyprus beyond the human factor'.¹¹

Given the geostrategic importance that the Cyprus question has for Turkey, the analysis in this section highlights and evaluates the strategic factors and the aspirations of the Turkish side on this issue. This process will help to understand the political positions expressed by Turkey in the negotiations, which are in accordance with its wider strategic planning, as this research will demonstrate.

Turkey's strategic plans for Cyprus relate to its bigger objective, which is the complete control of the island. While Cyprus has always been important for Turkey for several reasons¹², Turkey's control of Cyprus ensures the security of the Turkish state and makes it an important state actor in the Eastern Mediterranean, and, by extension, also in the Middle East.¹³ Moreover, by controlling Cyprus, Turkey would gain a comparative advantage against Greece, ensure control over sea lanes, have the possibility to claim benefits from the exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and, at the same time, become a strong player on

⁹ Fatih Mehmet Sayin, 'Solution of the Cyprus Problem and Turkish Position' (2008) 24 *Journal of Qafqaz University* 53; Altuğ Günel, 'What Does Turkey Want from Cyprus?' in Michális S. Michael, Yücel Vural (eds), *Cyprus and the Roadmap for Peace: A Critical Interrogation of the Conflict* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2018) 47; Örmeci, Kisacik (no 3).

¹⁰ Nihat Erim, 'Reminiscences on Cyprus - Nihat Erim' (1974) 4(2-3) *Foreign Policy: A Quarterly Journal of the Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara* 7.

¹¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *The Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position (To Στρατηγικό Βάθος: Η Διεθνής Θέση της Τουρκίας)* (Athens: Piotita, 2010) 279 (in Greek).

¹² Hüseyin Işıksal, 'The Four Stages of Turkish Position in Cyprus: The Elements of Continuity and Change' in Hüseyin Işıksal, Ozan Örmeci (eds), *Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Millennium*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015) 297, 297-298.

¹³ Evaghoras L. Evaghorou, 'Energy Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and Geostrategic Implications on the Cyprus Issue' (2020) 13(1) *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies* 109, 113.

energy issues.¹⁴ The causes behind the control of Cyprus by Turkey also determine the Turkish aggression against the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), which takes various forms. The main expressions of Turkish aggression against the RoC are the deployment of Turkish officials for the integration of the occupied territories into Turkey; the systematic violations of the Cypriot EEZ; the deterioration of the character of the occupied territories by the systematic and ongoing settlement and a campaign of intense Islamisation;¹⁵ the frequent violation of the ceasefire line regime by expansion into the buffer zone; the settlement of Varosha; the direction of immigration flows from third countries to the island; and, the non-recognition of the RoC. Additionally, and in relation to Greece, which Turkey considers as a regional competitor especially in the case of Cyprus, the deepest reasons for Turkey's strategic interest in the island are: (a) the geographical position of Cyprus, which is extremely important for Turkey due to state security reasons;¹⁶ (b) the potential of blocking Turkey's access to the open sea if Cyprus passes under complete Greek control;¹⁷ and (c) Turkey's fear of the fact that Greek supremacy on the island, due to the majority population of Greek Cypriots (G/C), strengthens the aspirations of the Greek side for full Hellenisation of the island.¹⁸ Based on the Turkish perspective for the importance of Cyprus, it is evident that Turkey will hardly give up its achievements on the island, as these are directly intertwined with its national aspirations. According to the Turkish perspective, a possible solution of the Cyprus problem should cover its geostrategic priorities mentioned above, and provide safeguards for its strategic concerns.

The strategic balance of power, which was formed in the last decades and remains unchanged until today, shows that Turkey has a military advantage in Cyprus.¹⁹ The

¹⁴ James Leigh, Predrag Vukovic, 'A Geopolitics of Cyprus' (December 2011) 15(4) *MERIA (Middle East Review of International Affairs)* 59; Emre İşeri, Ahmet Çağrı Bartan, 'Turkey's Geostrategic Vision and Energy Concerns in the Eastern Mediterranean Security Architecture: A View from Ankara' in Zenonas Tziarras (ed.), *The New Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean: Trilateral Partnerships and Regional Security* (Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre, 2019) 111.

¹⁵ Dilek Latif, 'Beyond Secular? AKP's Religious Policies and Societal Polarization in North Cyprus' (2021) 22(5) *Turkish Studies* 801.

¹⁶ Günal (no 9).

¹⁷ Işıl Kazan, 'Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, Seen from Turkey' in Thomas Diez (ed.), *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict: Modern Conflict Postmodern Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 54.

¹⁸ Mustafa Aydın, *Turkish Foreign Policy: Framework and Analysis* (Ankara: Center for Strategic Studies, 2004) 67.

¹⁹ Michalis Kontos, George Bitsis, 'Power Games in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus: The Trouble with Turkey's Coercive Diplomacy' (2018) 30(1) *Cyprus Review* 51, 52.

presence of approximately 40,000 Turkish soldiers and excessive, compared to that of the G/C, military equipment, with particular emphasis on air and naval advantages, as well as the fact that Cyprus is geographically closer to Turkey, favour the initiative for military movements by the Turkish side. Also, the possibility of a new Turkish military operation on the island cannot be ruled out, as Turkey's political objective for the international recognition of the partition of Cyprus through the recognition of the pseudo-state (or so-called state) in the northern part of the island has not yet been achieved, nor has a solution been reached that would solidify its gains from the 1974 invasion of Cyprus. A new military initiative by Turkey in Cyprus, if operationally successful, will ensure full control of the island. On the other hand, the possibility of military actions by Turkey is difficult to materialise due to the high political cost for Turkey, despite the Turkish perception that the politics of weapons is fruitful in this strategy, especially in Cyprus.²⁰ The obvious difficulties relate to the fact that a new military operation would provoke a military reaction by Greece, as an ally of the RoC, but also the political reaction of other states in the region, as well as the great powers, including the United Kingdom, which is also a guarantor power of the RoC. At the same time, it should be noted that such an action would have adverse effects on the image of Turkey vis-à-vis other states in the region and EU member states, since the RoC is a member state of the EU. It would also affect developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, with adjustments in the correlation of power causing the reaction of others states in the region.

Additionally, and regarding the strategic facts and their effects on the negotiations for a resolution, it should be noted that the illegal declaration, on 15 November 1983, of the independence of the so-called 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' ('TRNC') is recognised only by Turkey and is accompanied by a permanent Turkish pursuit of international recognition of the illegal under international law, unrecognised entity of the 'TRNC' as an independent state. At the same time, Turkey carries the burden of maintaining the occupied territories, providing the necessary financial assistance to the T/C community.²¹ As Ankara maintains strong economic, political, social and

²⁰ Evaghoras L. Evaghorou, 'An Offensive Realism Approach: Turkey as a Regional Power' in Akis Kalaitzidis (ed.), *Global Politics in the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* (Athens: ATINER, 2009) 227, 239.

²¹ Przemysław Osiewicz, 'Turkey and Its Position on the Cyprus Question Since 1974' (2013) 7 *Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej* 117, 120; Hasan Özertem, *Back to 'the Tradition': Turkey's Changing Position from a Federal to a Two-State Solution to the Cyprus Conflict*, Notes de l'Ifri (Paris: The French Institute of International Relations - Ifri, July 2021) 11-13.

cultural ties with the T/C, providing them with all kinds of assistance, it also maintains full hegemonic control over the occupied territories in Northern Cyprus.²² Consequently, all actions by Turkey to strengthen its connection with the occupied territories aim at consolidating the occupation and maximising Turkey's influence and control over Cyprus. Part of these efforts is the continuous settlement of the occupied areas, changing the composition of the population, as well as the Islamisation of the occupied areas with an intense religionisation of the population and their social life, which in fact worries the T/C community itself.²³

Furthermore, in juxtaposition with Turkey's strategic advantage on the island, the strategic limitations which undermine Turkey's strategic aspirations in the region and partially also on the Cyprus question, must be highlighted. Its maximalist revisionist aspirations in the region, consequently also at the expense of Cyprus, imply an arrogance (given that they are not consistent with Turkey's real power) which harms, in the end, Turkey itself. The collapse of Davutoğlu's doctrine of 'zero problems' with neighbouring countries, the rupture with other Muslim states in its region and the tensions in its relations with European states due to the Ukrainian war, confirm to a specific degree Turkey's inability to fulfill its hegemonic aspirations. Further weaknesses would include the fact that relations with the NATO and the USA have been disturbed –due to Turkey's role in Syria, the relations it has developed with Russia amidst the Ukrainian war and Turkey's stand regarding Sweden and Finland's admission to the NATO– as well as Turkey's negative attitude towards the EU on immigration, in its accession negotiations, and its reactions to the accession of other European states into the NATO. In addition, important domestic problems, such as the divisive polarisation of the internal political scene with the even greater centralisation of power by President Erdogan, the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, the weaknesses and the uncertain future of the Turkish economy, as well as the lack of respect for human rights, negatively affect Turkey's external power.

On the other hand, the comparative advantages that Turkey has on the island, vis-à-vis the RoC and Greece, significantly bolster its efforts to achieve its strategic goals, despite the strategic difficulties Turkey faces in broader foreign policy issues. These

²² George Kyris, 'Turkey, Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot Political Parties: The Ephemeral Catalyst of EU?' (2011) 10 *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 97; George Kyris, 'Sovereignty and Engagement without Recognition: Explaining the Failure of Conflict Resolution in Cyprus' (2018) 17(4) *Ethnopolitics* 426; Ali Dayıoğlu, Nur Köprülü, 'Turkey's New Identity Revisited and its Islamist Reflections in North Cyprus', (2019) 19(4) *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 605.

²³ Latif (no 15) 811.

advantages mainly relate to Turkey's superior military, economic, strategic and diplomatic power, compared to those of the RoC; its role in the Eastern Mediterranean as a pivotal powerful state; its partial rapprochement with the USA and the diversification of its stance in the NATO, striving for exchanges on other issues; its role in the Ukrainian war, which has expanded to portray Turkey as an important player and mediator; and, finally, the efforts to rebuild its relations with Israel and Egypt, which have direct effects on the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean, including on energy issues.

Political Implications: Turkey's Position on the Cyprus Question

As demonstrated above, the real causes for Turkey's aspirations in Cyprus have purely geostrategic characteristics. The following section attempts to highlight and interpret the Turkish political and negotiating positions in the process of resolving the Cyprus problem, as well as their connection with Turkey's geostrategic objectives in Cyprus. As will be pointed out below, although there are occasionally changes in Turkey's positions in some main aspects of the negotiations, these do not deviate from its strategic objective, which is the strategic and political control of the island on the basis of maintaining a comparative power advantage to its favor.

Turkey's contemporary interest in Cyprus begins as early as the 1950s, when Turkish politics sought to get involved in the Cyprus case by linking it to the Turkish mobilisations against the Greeks of Istanbul, in September 1955.²⁴ Turkey claims that the roots of the Cyprus problem can be traced back to 1963, when the cooperation between the G/C and the T/C, which had been agreed upon in 1960 with the establishment of the RoC, was undermined by the G/C, who attempted to fully control the state and who, since then, according to the Turkish side, maintain that they are the only representatives of the RoC.²⁵ With this position, Turkey tries to justify its interventions in the internal affairs of Cyprus. Under the pretext of restoring the constitutional order and protecting the T/C, it sought to strategically control the island. Also, based on this position, it does not recognize the RoC, since, as it claims, it is now represented only by the G/C.

On the same basis, Turkey argues that its 'military intervention' in 1974 brought peace to the island, resulting in no further armed conflict henceforth. For the Turkish side, its soldiers in Cyprus are the 'peace force' which brought stability to the island

²⁴ Behlül Özkan, 'Making Cyprus a National Cause in Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1948–1965' (2015) 15(4) *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 541; Örmeci, Kisacik (no 3).

²⁵ Özertem (no 21).

after 1974 and continues to be the guarantor of T/C safety.²⁶ Turkey's argument that no other conflict was observed after the Turkish invasion, resulting in 'peace being maintained',²⁷ rather confirms the view that Turkey is attempting to legitimise the existing *status quo* on the island, and extend its control on Cyprus, with the consent of the G/C. Since decades, in fact, Turkey has considered that the Cyprus question has been resolved with the 'peace operation' of 1974, as it defines its invasion. However, contrary to Turkey's position, the Cyprus question continues to be a problem, with Turkey itself accepting its very existence by participating in the negotiations for its solution.

Turkey, ignoring the issue of its own military presence in Cyprus, maintains that the problem concerns the two communities, which, on the basis of political equality, will negotiate in order to find a mutually agreed framework of coexistence on the island. The aim of this position is to disengage itself from the commitments of international law and the internationalisation of the issue as one of invasion and illegal occupation of an internationally recognised state. As a result of the Turkish position that the Cyprus question is a problem of coexistence of two different communities, Turkey in 1983 made an illegal, according to international law and the UN resolutions, declaration of independence of the so-called "TRNC", which has since only been recognised by Turkey.²⁸ The declaration of the pseudo-state was a tactical move aimed at securing the wider Turkish strategy for complete control of Cyprus, but it has also served as an instrumental vehicle both for the control of the T/C community and for its claims against the RoC.

With reference to the negotiation procedures for a resolution on the Cyprus problem, whenever those are conducted, Turkey's argument is based on the fact that, as a guarantor power and 'motherland' of the T/C,²⁹ it actively supports the talks held

²⁶ Özertem (no 21) 9.

²⁷ Tozun Bahcheli, 'Cyprus in the Post-Cold War Era: Moving Toward a Settlement' in Tozun Bahcheli, Theodore A. Coulombis, Patricia Carley (eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy: Cyprus, the Aegean, and Regional Stability* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1997) 20, 25.

²⁸ Osiewicz (no 21) 120; Ilias Kouskouvelis, Kalliopi Chainoglou, 'Against the Law: Turkey's Annexation Efforts in Occupied Cyprus' in Ruth Bonneville-Kok, Jure Vidmar (eds), *Hague Yearbook of International Law / Annuaire de La Haye de Droit International*, Vol. 29 (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2016) 55, 56.

²⁹ For the special relations between Turkey and the T/C community see Unut Bozkurt, 'Turkey: From the "Motherland" to the "IMF of Northern Cyprus"?' (2014) 26(1) *Cyprus Review* 83; Nikos Moudouros, *State of Exception in the Mediterranean: Turkish and Turkish Cypriot Community* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021).

under the auspices of UN for a final solution to the problem. For Turkey, this solution will mainly aim at establishing a new bicomunal, bizonal federation, based on the political equality between G/C and T/C, with a federal government and two constituent states of equal status; that is, of the same formal power, without one to prevail or impose upon the other.³⁰ Additionally, Turkey maintains that if this could not be achieved, it would prefer the solution of two separate states on the island.³¹ Based on this argument, Turkey contends that a resolution on the Cyprus problem should seriously address the need of the T/C community for political equality with the G/C community. Turkey also points out the special relationship that Turkey has with Cyprus, as a guarantor power for the security of the T/C on the island, and still believes, for its part, that the guarantor status should be one of the main insurances to maintain peace and stability on the island.³² Thus, Turkey, under the pretext of protecting the T/C, tries to play a catalytic role in the form of the solution to the Cyprus problem and, through this, aims to perpetuate its presence in Cyprus.

Moreover, in order to understand Turkey's strategy and its long-term horizon, in spite of the many differentiations in its positions in the negotiation process, it is crucial to analyse the strategic and political specifics during the accession process of the RoC to the EU (1999-2004). At the time, the Cyprus question had been high in the Euro-Turkish agenda, given the integration of the RoC in the EU at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century.³³ At that time, the Turkish positions regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem were extremely intransigent, given that the RoC, by joining the EU, was to gain strategic benefits against Turkey, forcing Ankara to react. Until 2002, Turkish governments had no intention of changing their position on the Cyprus question, not even when they were offered in return the intensification and acceleration of Turkey's negotiation process for accession to the EU. The reason behind this shift in attitude was the beginning of accession talks between the EU and the RoC, meaning that the EU was in negotiation only with the G/C side, thus fueling

³⁰ Mustafa Turkes, 'Cycles of Transformation of the Cyprus Question' in Nursin Atesoglu Gurney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007) 159, 159-162.

³¹ Contrary to Turkey's earlier leading position, which had pointed towards a reunification of Cyprus, officials of the Turkish government now defend a two-state solution or a loose confederation; the proposal for a loose confederation referring to a confederal state that would bring sovereign states of G/C and T/C under the same umbrella, in a decentralised system. See in Özertem (no 21) 4.

³² Özertem (no 21) 8.

³³ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774* (3rd edn., first published 2000, London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

Turkey's fears that the T/C would be marginalised. Besides, if the RoC would become a member state of the EU, it would be able to block Turkey's possible accession process. Many Turkish politicians expressed their opposition to the accession process of Cyprus. They warned of the consequences on the Cyprus question resulting from a possible accession of the RoC to the EU, stressing the fact that Turkey would have no intention of changing its position on the Cyprus question as long as EU policy would limit the chances of a resolution.³⁴ In late 2002, Turkey's positions in the negotiation process for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem changed. The new Turkish government, under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, clearly favoured the reunification of Cyprus based on the Annan Plan that had been under negotiation during that period.³⁵ The initial Turkish reaction to the G/C attempt to realise the political goal of EU accession –to adopt a highly uncompromising position on the Cyprus question– but also its later position in support of the Annan Plan for a solution to the problem, revealed its real intentions. Not a sincere desire to seek a mutually beneficial solution to the Cyprus question, but rather a desire to not allow its opponents to obtain any strategic advantage, either with or without a solution of the problem. Turkey's political positions have merely a rhetorical character regarding the solution of the Cyprus problem, while strategic balances play a dominant role for Turkey.³⁶

Additionally, and in relation to its attitude towards the EU nowadays, Turkey maintains that it should adapt to the new regime that will be created by the settlement of the Cyprus question and accept the primary law that will result from its resolution. This will continue to be necessary for the security of the new order that will be established in Cyprus after the resolution. These positions reveal Turkey's strategic objective to prevent the European *acquis* from being applied to Cyprus, which would potentially limit Turkish influence on the island. Consequently, it is observed that Turkey systematically avoids the application of the European *acquis*, while simultaneously seeking to create primary law for the case of Cyprus, aiming to create problems in the future with the RoC membership in the EU.

In conclusion, it is noted that Turkey's political positions on the Cyprus question circumvent the principles of international law for the independence and sovereignty of states and more specifically the RoC. On the other hand, Turkey's positions in the

³⁴ Suvarierol (no 5); Melike Baştürk, 'The Issue of Cyprus in the EU Accession of Turkey', (2011) 2011(4) *Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union* 15.

³⁵ Kyris, 'Turkey ...' (no 22) 98.

³⁶ Kivanç Ulusoy, 'The Cyprus Conflict: Turkey's Strategic Dilemma' (2016) 18(4) *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 393.

negotiations are determined by the permanent Turkish national interests in Cyprus, and, as demonstrated in the next section, they serve its strategic goals on the island. The Turkish attitude is the result of a favourable to Turkey distribution of power, and the identification of Turkish national interests with those of the great powers. In this context, we observe a demonstration of tolerance on the part of the international community towards Turkey's aggressive actions against the RoC. Since the Turkish invasion of 1974 the issue of substantive sanctions against Turkey due to its aggressive attitude, but also for the violation of the principles of international law, has never been seriously considered.

Turkey's Positions and Aspirations in the Negotiation for Finding a Solution

Talks between the G/C and T/C for finding a solution to the Cyprus problem under the auspices of the UN are held at regular intervals, with long periods of interruption whenever the talks collapse.³⁷ Through the negotiation process, in which the interested parties participate, it is expected that a solution will emerge, which will be the legal basis for the establishment of a new state as a continuation of the RoC, since it will be signed and accepted by all involved parties. The following section examines how Turkey's positions on critical aspects of the Cyprus problem are related to Turkey's strategic goals.

The *status quo*, as it has been formed, largely determines the character of the negotiations, but also the political positions of the two parties in Cyprus. The Turkish side has the advantage in strategic terms as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion; namely, the seizure and continued occupation of 36.4% of the territory of the RoC, but also the demographic changes that have occurred since the persecution of the native G/C population and the continued settlement of the occupied areas with Turks from Turkey. Thus, in the negotiations, Turkey, either by itself or through the T/C, argues that the 'realities' –as it calls the change in conditions that have occurred– must be taken into account when it comes to the proposal for the new status of Cyprus. With this position, Turkey seeks to legitimise the 'deeds' of the occupation and at the same time to overturn the composition of the population on the island, mainly through settlement. After all, given Turkey's advantage in the military balance of power against G/C on the island, the imposition of Turkey's views in a possible resolution plan becomes even more intense.

³⁷ Kyris, 'Sovereignty ...' (no 22) 432-435.

Nominally, the G/C and T/C participate in the negotiations, while the latter draw their power from the presence of the Turkish army and the Turkish state which stands behind them.³⁸ At the negotiation process Turkey is the one finally determining the T/C positions. Indicatively, despite any differences between the leaderships of the T/C community and Turkey in the process of solving the Cyprus problem, ultimately the T/C positions are manipulated by Turkey's foreign policy decisions, which demonstrates the strong control that the latter exercises over the T/C community, but also the inability of the T/C to play any role in solving the problem.³⁹ Consequently, in the dialogue between the G/C and T/C communities, Turkey seeks to become the final judge of the arrangement sought by the T/C, while, at the same time, it has managed to strengthen its position that the Cyprus question is not a matter of invasion and occupation, but one of differences between two communities, which are conducting negotiations for the arrangement of the dispute.

A matter of primary importance for Turkey is the status of the new state that will emerge from the solution. Turkey, as became apparent from the latest negotiation efforts (Annan Plan and Crans-Montana negotiations), is defending the position of full equality between the two communities. The Turkish side claims that the new state that will be agreed upon by the G/C and the T/C will not be a continuation of the RoC, which was established based on the Zurich-London Agreements of 1960, but rather a new and completely different state with political equality between the two communities, which will be the two constitutional parts. With reference to this position, Turkish politicians mention that a new country will emerge from the agreed solution on the Cyprus problem, a federal one, which will not be the RoC,⁴⁰ thus making clear Ankara's position on the Cyprus question regarding the character of the new state. Turkey's claim against the creation of a new state as a continuation of the RoC seeks to legitimise the achievements of its strategic pursuits and render the new state a satellite controlled by Turkey, since the former will be politically unstable.

³⁸ Erol Kaymak, 'The Development of Turkish Cypriot Politics' in James Ker-Lindsay, Hubert Faustmann (eds), *The Government and Politics of Cyprus* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) 231.

³⁹ For instance, (a) Turkey was able to bypass the will of Rauf Denktash, the hard-liner leader of the T/C, and pushed forward in 2002 with the Annan Plan, which did not advocate for a two-state solution, as Denktash's side claimed; (b) there were divergences of opinion between T/C leader Mustafa Akinci, regarding Turkey's move to reopen part of Varosha in late 2019, but eventually Ankara's policy proceeded with the opening of the closed city Varosha; (c) the push by Turkey, in the 2020 elections, to elect Tatar as T/C leader, rather than Akinci, with the former advocating for a harder stance on the Cyprus question.

⁴⁰ Örmeci, Kisacik (no 3).

Regarding the political regime of the new state, Turkey is promoting a new state of affairs, compared to that of the Zurich-London Agreements, which will be based on a regime with elements of a loose federal system or a confederation in which the RoC will be completely set aside.⁴¹ This is inferred from repeated statements by Turkish officials, in which it is made clear that Turkey seeks a high degree of independence for the constituent states.⁴² Turkey supports a bizonal, bicomunal federation solution, in which the resulting new state will consist of a new partnership of two constituent states between G/C and T/C, equal to each other. This new state system will emerge, as Turkey maintains, from the 'co-founding peoples' of the island, which, in 1960, had agreed on a bicomunal cooperative, exercising the rights of self-determination, and had ceded sovereignty to the official central government of Cyprus. Turkey maintains that, as a guarantor power and the mother country of the T/C, it will not allow any solution, or the creation of any new state for the G/C to impose themselves on the T/C, but rather, a solution that would ensure the equality of the two sides.⁴³ In light of these statements, it is observed that Turkey –seeking full equality between the two communities, in a mismatch with the population mix on the island– attempts to impose a regime of a confederation of two equal states, with some federal elements, which will favor the Turkish interests and which, only for diplomatic reasons, it calls a 'bizonal, bicomunal federation'.

Also, regarding the political regime that would emerge after the solution of the Cyprus problem, it is pointed out that Turkey occasionally expresses support to a solution with two separate states, in contrast to the position of establishing a new state with a loose confederation. Following the 1974 Turkish invasion in Cyprus, the Kemalist establishment advocated Taksim (partition) as the solution for the Cyprus problem, through the creation of separate states. Nonetheless, this position was slowly altered towards a solution for a bizonal, bicomunal federation in the aftermath of

⁴¹ Andreas Theophanous, 'A Proposal for a Normal State: The Cyprus Problem after the Five Party Informal Conference' (2021) 33(2) *Cyprus Review* 83, 95.

⁴² See, for example, the statements by the former Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu on the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye, *Foreign Minister Davutoğlu in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus* (December 2013), available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-in-turkish-republic-of-northern-cyprus.en.mfa> (last accessed 2 March 2023).

⁴³ For Turkey's specific positions see in the document submitted on 18 May 2015 by Turkey in the context of the work of the Turkey-EU Association Council at Association between the European Union Community and Turkey, The Association Council, *Cover Note Subject: 53rd meeting of the EU-Turkey Association Council (Brussels, 18 May 2015)*, UE-TR 4806/15 (Brussels 28 May 2015) 30-36.

the Helsinki European Council meeting in December 1999⁴⁴, at a time when Turkey still aspired to joining the EU. Additionally, AKP's policy on Cyprus, when it came to power in 2002, was in agreement with a solution on the basis of a bizonal, bicommunal federation.⁴⁵ It was under the AKP that two major attempts took place to solve the Cyprus problem on a political basis that did not involve a two-state solution (the Annan Plan and the Crans-Montana negotiations). Nonetheless, this position was altered in the years following the debacle at Crans-Montana, as evidenced by Turkey's position in the Geneva meeting of 2021, when the Turkish government reverted to a two-state solution.⁴⁶ These differences are the result of negotiating manoeuvres by the Turkish diplomacy in the context of the wider developments concerning Turkey's foreign policy. Those, however, converge in the permanent goal of obtaining the maximum possible benefits from the solution of the Cyprus problem, which consists of the greatest, to the extent possible, control of the state that will result from any solution. With Turkey's current position in support of a two-state solution, the Turkish side aims at eventually moving towards a confederal solution.⁴⁷ In the case of either two separate states or a bizonal, bicommunal federation, Turkey's geostrategic pursuit in an eventual solution to the Cyprus problem is to maintain its comparative advantage, in terms of power and its control over the island while simultaneously preventing control of the island exclusively by the G/C side.

Another important issue for Turkey is the issue of guarantees for the new state. As Turkey pursues a quadripartite negotiation, which would bypass the RoC, in addition to the other goals of its pursuit, it also aims to perpetuate the system of guarantees of 1960. The retention of Turkish troops, under the role of guarantor of the new state, as sought by the Turkish negotiating side, reveals Turkey's intentions in relation to this matter.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it should be noted that Turkey is now discussing different variations of the guarantees system, a fact that could be interpreted as an intention to abandon its longstanding position for permanent guarantees and a willingness to diversify on this subject; not meaning in any way that Turkey would abandon its plans for control of Cyprus even by military means. The Turkish side considers that a tran-

⁴⁴ Kivanc Ulusoy, 'The Europeanization of Turkey and its Impact on the Cyprus Problem' (2008) 10(3) *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 309.

⁴⁵ Özertem (no 21).

⁴⁶ Özertem (no 21).

⁴⁷ Andreas Theophanous, 'The Cyprus Problem, the EU and the UN' (2023) 23 *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development* 72, 72.

⁴⁸ Özertem (no 21) 7-8.

sitional period can be agreed on, in order to maintain the status of guarantees for the new state and the retention of armed forces on the island for a certain period of time. At the same time though, Turkey maintains its permanent position for guarantees in the T/C constituent state.

The territorial and, by extension, the issue of properties constitutes a crucial red line for Turkey in the negotiations, as it seeks to achieve the least possible territorial readjustments in a future solution. Consequently, the Turkey's policy objective remains the return of as little territory as possible to the RoC. According to Turkey, the return of the G/C constituent state should not affect a large number of the T/Cs who own and exploit G/C property in the occupied territories, whose demographic and property profile Turkey has altered over the years.⁴⁹ It should also be noted that Turkey insists that the settlement agreement ensure that the T/C will maintain the majority of population and assets in their constituent state, so as not to alter the population composition of the T/C-administered constituent state. With its position on the territorial issue, Turkey seeks to fully 'Turkify' the northern half of Cyprus, which will be fully controlled by Ankara, and at the same time ensure a strategic advantage in determining developments -through the T/C- also in the remaining half of the island. At the same time, and in support of this pursuit, Turkey's policies in the northern occupied area, are increasingly leading towards the complete Turkification of the north part.

In conclusion, it is observed that Turkey, through a solution of the Cyprus problem, seeks to transform the emerging new state into a satellite in its sphere of influence. Turkey uses a rhetoric that seeks to promote its image as a part that contributes with good will to a solution of the problem, while on the other hand, its strategic plans for complete control of the island are apparent behind its political positions. Turkey's positions in the negotiation process, as demonstrated above, fully express the Turkish interests and strategic aspirations. In fact, in the current period when Turkey's claims against Greece are more and more pressing, its positions on the Cyprus question express a broad strategic plan aimed at dominating the Eastern Mediterranean, at the expense of both Cyprus and Greece. This is because Turkey includes Greek-Turkish issues and Cyprus in its wider hegemonic claims, while at the same time it is not negligible for the Turkish strategy that Greece is the main ally of Cyprus, in a political and military context, and constitutes the main shield of protection of the RoC. In addition, it is noted that, although Turkey's positions through the negotiation process for

⁴⁹ Perry Anderson, 'The Divisions of Cyprus' (24 April 2008) 30(8) *London Review of Books* 7.

a solution to the Cyprus problem have not been static -fluctuations in the negotiating positions on several subjects have been observed, such as the displacements between one confederate state and full separation with two existing states– they reflect at all times a stable, macroscopic, geostrategic pursuit by the Turkish state. This pursuit concerns securing, as much as possible, the control of the Cypriot state and its entire territory after any solution would have been achieved.

Non-Solution and Consequences: Strategic Dilemmas for Turkey

In every negotiation process that begins to find a solution to the Cyprus problem, there is a serious possibility the process will end in a deadlock. After all, for decades no negotiation process has successfully concluded, even when a final solution plan had been on the table, as was the case in April 2004 with the Annan plan,⁵⁰ or when the negotiations truly reached an advanced stage, as was the case in Crans-Montana in 2017. In light of this eventuality of not finding a solution to the Cyprus problem, it is sought to determine the consequences of a non-solution for Turkey and speculate on its future strategic moves. Regardless of a final arrangement or not on the Cyprus question, Turkey will find itself in front of several strategic dilemmas, such as the following: First, determine its reaction to the EU's attitude due to the non-resolution of the Cyprus problem and how, henceforth, it will manage the Euro-Turkish relations in general.⁵¹ Second, consider how to position itself politically regarding the issue of hydrocarbon extraction from the Cypriot EEZ and whether it will continue to challenge and violate international law regarding the rights of the RoC. Third, consider its position towards the USA, and the Western alliance in general, regarding the non-resolution of the Cyprus question and the perpetuation of a problem that destabilises the Eastern Mediterranean. In case intercommunal talks on the island, if and when they restart, do not lead to a comprehensive settlement of the problem in the immediate future, Turkey may be led to redefine its strategy regarding Cyprus, seeking a permanent unilateral solution, which, from a Turkish perspective, would include the absorption of the occupied areas by the Turkish state.

⁵⁰ Anderson (no 49).

⁵¹ Tarik Oğuzlu, 'Turkey and the Cyprus Dispute: Pitfalls and Opportunities' (2010) 1 *Ankara Bar Review* 73. For example, see the question of how Turkey will handle the EU's demands to open its airports and sea ports to airplanes and ships of the RoC in Çiğdem Nas, 'Turkey and the European Union: A Stumbling Accession Process under New Conditions' in Özden Zeynep Oktav (ed.), *Turkey in the 21st Century: Quest for a New Foreign Policy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011) 159.

Observing Turkey's strategy in the past and its overall behavior in relation to the Cyprus issue, and in case a solution is not found in the near future, it can be assumed that Turkey will intensify its pressure towards the RoC for a solution that will increasingly satisfy the Turkish strategic interests, placing the responsibility for the no-solution on the G/C side. Moreover, Turkey will also become more aggressive against the RoC, particularly regarding the maritime zones and energy issues, around which it has constantly created tensions and has spread fear against the RoC, including but not limited to the systematic violation of the Cypriot EEZ.⁵² Furthermore, if the hegemonic interests of the great powers in the Eastern Mediterranean, which Turkey serves to a wide extent, are to be considered, then the balance regarding the benefits of the settlement of the Cyprus problem will lean in Turkey's favour. After all, the Cyprus question could be placed in a broader context of exchanges between Turkey and the US with the EU, in light of both the Russia-Ukraine war and the Western states' need for support in the NATO.

Regarding collaboration with other states and organisations maintained by the RoC, which operate at the expense of Turkish interests, Turkey will react towards the limitation or even the altogether dwindling of the benefits provided to the RoC. In relation to the RoC's alliance with Greece, Turkey is and will continue to be aggressive against both states, possibly causing a 'hot incident' that will lead to a *fait accompli* in favor of the Turkish interests or moving forward in arrangements through negotiations, which will serve those interests. Given the problems Greece faces from Turkey's continuous aggressiveness and provocations –such as the need for refugee management, the questioning of its sovereign rights in the sea, the undermining of its hydrocarbon extraction capabilities—⁵³ the Greek reaction to the Turkish claims on settlement of the Cyprus problem could be quite weak. Or, Greece could pursue to disconnect the Cyprus question from the Greek-Turkish dispute. Additionally, and regarding the Cyprus-Israel-Greece cooperation mainly on energy issues, Turkey will seek to optimise its relations with Israel, with which it can cooperate for the exploitation of energy sources,⁵⁴ seeking to make it clear that the cooperation of Israel with Turkey could offer more benefits to the Israeli state compared to its cooperation with Cyprus and Greece.

⁵² Andreas Stergiou, Christos Kollias. 'The Political Economy of Turkish Foreign Policy' (2022) 24(1) *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 42, 54.

⁵³ For example, see the Turkish violations of the Greek territorial waters and the illegal, under International Law, Turkish-Libyan Memorandum in Stergiou, Kollias (no 52) 52.

⁵⁴ Demiryol (no 5), 455-456.

Turkey, taking advantage of the favourable attitude of the USA due to its interests in the region, will continue to claim and demand more benefits, both on the Cyprus question and more widely, in order to serve its own interests in the region. In fact, given the importance and criticality for Turkey, as well as for the USA and the EU, of a number of issues in the region –such as dealing with Russia and the management of the war in Ukraine; the definitive management of the Syrian crisis; and, the rewarming of Israeli-Turkish relations– Turkey is expected to seek greater compensation for the satisfaction of American and European demands. The Cyprus question could also be included in these exchanges.

Turkey's relationship with the EU is also of critical importance, especially with regards to Turkey's process of accession to EU.⁵⁵ The Cyprus issue is directly connected to Turkey's European integration process.⁵⁶ Also, as a separate issue, it is affected by the European dilemmas that do not exist in Turkey's foreign policy planning. If no solution is found to the Cyprus problem, dilemmas arise for Turkey regarding how its relationship with the EU will be shaped. In particular, Turkey should clarify its position regarding the EU's demands, as they are expressed in the Ankara Protocol of 2005,⁵⁷ which Ankara continues to not apply in relation to the RoC. Dilemmas due to the non-solution will also arise on energy issues, since the more the RoC benefits from their exploitation, the more Turkey's negative reactions will escalate. Continued Turkish challenges against the RoC must be taken for granted, especially for as long as Turkey's specific attitude does not have any negative consequences on Turkish interests or does not affect its relationship with European states to a significant degree. It should also be pointed out that the provocative and aggressive attitude of the Turkish strategy against the RoC and Greece is also closely linked to the degree of the deterrent reaction of its opponents.

It should be noted that Turkey realises that a solution to the Cyprus problem will have a positive impact on the image of the Turkish state towards other states and especially towards the European ones.⁵⁸ The positive impact for Turkey would be a product of the Turkish constructive, in one way or another, contribution in finding

⁵⁵ Baştürk (no 34); Zerrin Torun, 'From Convergence to Divergence: The Compatibility of Turkish and EU Foreign Policy' in Wulf Reiners, Ebru Turhan (eds), *EU-Turkey Relations: Theories, Institutions, and Policies* (Cham: Springer International Publishing 2021) 323.

⁵⁶ Mirela Bogdani, *Turkey and the Dilemma of EU Accession* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011) 26-47.

⁵⁷ Stefan Talmon, 'The European Union – Turkey Controversy over Cyprus or a Tale of Two Treaty Declarations' (2006) 5(3) *Chinese Journal of International Law* 579.

⁵⁸ Suvarierol (no 5).

a solution. This can be particularly noted in the reports of the Turkish officials who mention that the resolution of the Cyprus question will be a positive message to the international community, as well as a positive development for the region, with many advantages in terms of cooperation and the removal of the difficulties that Turkey faces in its relations with the EU. However, the rhetoric of Turkish officials regarding their desire to resolve the Cyprus problem is diametrically opposed, as presented above, to their political positions on the negotiation process and their real pursuit of a solution that will exclusively satisfy Turkey's hegemonic aspirations.

Finally, it should be noted that Turkey relates the Cyprus problem and its solution with its broader strategic goals in the region and the strategic balance of power with its other neighboring states. These mainly concern Turkey's offensiveness and revisionism against Greece; the pursuit of hegemony in the Muslim world in its immediate region; the pursuit for deepening its cooperation with Israel after the restoration of the cold relations of the recent past, while at the same time dealing with a possible cooperation axis between Greece-Cyprus-Israel and in the future also Egypt. Consequently, and given that Turkey's strategic planning on the Cyprus question is directly affected by its broader strategic needs in its region, a non-solution, to the extent that it affects the above goals and Turkey's relations with the aforementioned states, will lead Turkey to more drastic decisions in dealing with the Cyprus question, in order to protect its interests in the region.

Conclusions

Presenting Turkey's strategy in relation to the Cyprus question and analysing accordingly its political and negotiating positions, we could reach the following conclusions. First, there is a strong degree of correlation between Turkey's negotiating positions in the efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem, and its strategic needs and national interests. A consequence of this finding is that Turkey's negotiating positions and actions to solve the Cyprus problem have as a starting point a long-term and permanent strategic planning regarding Cyprus, which the Turkish foreign policy follows precisely. This relates to the maintenance of permanent control over the island, since Turkish officials have always judged that the control of Cyprus largely ensures the security of the Turkish state, but also favours Turkey's hegemonic claims in the region. Thus, we observe the consistency and continuity in Turkey's intended goals regarding the Cyprus question, even though the negotiation tactics and political positions it adopts for its solution may have changed over time. On this basis, it is concluded that this situation benefits Turkey's interests, as the more time passes, the more the changes

that have occurred in the balance of power on the island, mainly with the invasion of 1974, are consolidated.

Considering the correlation between the Cyprus problem and the Euro-Turkish relations⁵⁹ and, to the extent that the developments regarding a solution affect Turkey's institutional relations with the EU, Turkey seeks to disconnect the two issues. In conclusion, however, it is noted that Turkey prioritises the achievement of its hegemonic aspirations in the region, which are also related to the strategic control of Cyprus, and not the progress in its European pathway, which in any case is adjusted on the basis of Turkey's aspirations rather than any real ambition for a substantial European process.

Turkey will continue to maintain maximalist positions on the Cyprus question until its strategic goals are fulfilled, as a result of the weakness of its opponent, the identification of its interests with the great powers, but also the indifference of the international community and the EU regarding a solution to the Cyprus problem. After all, as has already been pointed out, Turkey's pursuits on the Cyprus question directly relate to the weaknesses of its direct opponents in it. On the contrary, a change in Turkey's stance on the Cyprus question might occur as a result of, firstly, the possible strengthening of its direct rivals (RoC and Greece). Secondly, if Turkey's position is weakened by changes in its wider region. And, thirdly, a possible failure in fulfilling its maximalist hegemonic goals. A consequence of the above is that Turkey will continue to benefit from the privileged relationship it has with the USA and the UK on the Cyprus question for as long as Turkey serves Western interests.

Finally, according to Turkey's strategic planning, a weighted solution in favour of Turkish interests would increase its strategic superiority in the region and provide it with an important and primary role in regional geostrategic issues. However, and against the Turkish perspective regarding a final solution to the Cyprus problem and its intended goals, it is pointed out that an equal solution that would create a stable and secure Cypriot state would offer stability and security to the region, with a consequent positive impact on Turkey's national interests. The positive impact would improve the image of the Turkish state as a factor of stability in the region and a state that supports peace processes.

⁵⁹ Oğuzlu (no 51).

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